

nomination was sent up again at the beginning of the 105th Congress. Happily, after another hearing and after once again being able to seek and receive unanimous support on the Judiciary Committee, he was confirmed by the full Senate in July of this year.

Mr. Clay has been an able advocate of his profession. He has been a very successful attorney. He is one of the co-founders of one of the Nation's largest minority-run law firms, and a very successful one in our State. He is well respected by people throughout the legal community. So, for those reasons and for a variety of others, I was delighted to support his nomination and to work for his confirmation.

Unhappily, as I say, I will not be able to be at the investiture today, but I know his many friends and colleagues are with him and will celebrate his official swearing in to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. As I indicated at the hearing, in any case where people might not necessarily agree, as we find ourselves perhaps occasionally in disagreement on matters that come before the court, or before the Senate for that matter, I think he will bring strength and competence.

He served at one time as a clerk to Judge Damon Keith, who is currently on the sixth circuit and has just recently taken senior status. And, although not directly filling Judge Keith's spot, he, I am sure, will carry on Judge Keith's legacy on the bench and I think will be a fine advocate for the State of Michigan on the sixth circuit, and also, I think, will bring to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals a great deal of talent and will make a valuable contribution.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I am authorized to say that there will be no further votes today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ANOTHER TRAGEDY

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to call the attention of my colleagues to a story that appeared last week in the Cincinnati Post. This is the story. The headline is: "Woman Torched Nephew, Police Say—Youngster's Burns Untreated for Weeks."

Mr. President, the article tells the story of the awful abuse of an 8-year-old child in the Cincinnati area. The boy was set on fire—set on fire—with nail polish remover, and then sent to school for 3 weeks with his burns unattended.

Cincinnati police investigated what happened to this little boy. They have now charged his aunt with child endangering. They charged his aunt with setting him on fire—and also with abusing him with a belt, an extension cord, and shoes.

Mr. President, this is an obscene crime. After this woman's arrest, it was revealed that she had been charged with a similar crime involving the same little boy 2 years before. Don't we have to ask, Mr. President, what on Earth was that woman doing taking care of that child or any child? Why in the world was that child put back into that same home, put back with that abusive woman?

Mr. President, 3 weeks ago, I rose on the Senate floor to tell a similar tragic story. That story took place in Washington, DC. It was the story of a little 4-year-old girl named Monica Wheeler who was found dead, beaten to death in the bathroom of a man who was an acquaintance of her mother. Three years ago, one of Monica's siblings, her brother Andre, then aged 2, was also found dead in the same man's bathroom.

Mr. President, as I have come to the floor and cautioned before, it is up to the police and the courts to find out the truth about these particular cases. And we should not be interested in prosecuting anyone here on the Senate floor, no matter what we think. That certainly is what the courts are for. But I cannot stress enough that these awful crimes point to a responsibility that lies with us here in Congress, the responsibility to make sure we do all we can to stop these crimes from ever happening.

One thing we know for certain about these two cases—the Cincinnati case and the Washington case, and far too many other cases—is that there are too many children in this country today being returned to the care of people who have already abused and battered them, people who should not be allowed to take care of these children. Children are being returned to homes that are homes in name only and to parents who are parents in name only.

Every day in this country, three children actually die of abuse or neglect at the hands of a parent or their caretakers. That is approximately 1,200 children a year who die. And almost half of these children, shockingly, Mr. President, are killed after—after—their

tragic circumstances have come to the attention of the child welfare agencies.

At the end of 1996, Mr. President, over 525,000 children were in foster homes across this country. Over a year's time, it is estimated that 650,000 children will be in a foster home for at least a portion of that year. And shockingly, roughly 25 percent of the children in the foster care system at any one time will languish in foster care longer than 4 years. And 10 percent of these children will be in foster care longer than 7 years.

Mr. President, this problem has been growing for many years. It is at least in part the very unintended consequence of a law passed by Congress in 1980, a law that I have spoken on this floor I suppose at least a dozen times about since I came to the Senate. It is a law that was passed in 1980 that requires that reasonable efforts always be made to reunify families. In practice, Mr. President, this law has resulted in unreasonable efforts, unreasonable efforts being made to reunite families that are families in name only, families that never should be reunited. Children are being sent back to abusive parents, abusive care givers, and many times the result is death.

Mr. President, I have been working to change this for almost 3 years now. Last month, along with Senators CHAFEE, CRAIG, and ROCKEFELLER, and others, I introduced a bill that I hope will represent the culmination of this effort. The PASS Act—the Promotion of Adoption Safety and Support for Abused and Neglected Children Act—would make a difference. It would save young lives. It would change this 1980 law that I referenced. It would put an end to a tragic policy that has put parents' interests above the health and safety and even the survival of innocent children.

It would help child welfare agencies move faster to rescue these children. Mr. President, every child deserves a better fate than being shuttled from foster home to foster home for years on end.

That is why, Mr. President, we are working to pass this very important bill. Let us work together, after we pass the bill, then on the next step, which will be to continue to try to improve the system.

But the work that is in front of us today, Mr. President, is to pass the PASS Act, a bill that has been worked on extensively, a bill that will in fact benefit children in two ways: One, by moving them quickly through the system once they are in fact in foster care so that they do not languish in foster care for years on end so that they can have what every child needs, which is a caring and loving family; and the second thing the bill would do is save lives. We will never know what child's life will be saved or how many, but I am convinced, after talking with case-workers throughout the State of Ohio, children service agencies, and after having talked to many people throughout this country, that the 1980 law that

our bill will amend will in fact, by amending that law, save lives.

So I urge my colleagues, when this bill is brought to the floor, as I hope it will be in the next several weeks, to look at this bill, to pass it, and to move on so that we can make a very strong statement and do something very positive for America's children.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAFEE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I want to thank the distinguished Senator from Ohio very much for the work he has done on this legislation, the support he has given it, the kind things he has had to say about my part in it.

I think it is very important to stress that the Senator from Ohio has long been active in children's matters, particularly this area that we are involved with, namely, adoption and foster care. He knows the existing problems in this system and has been very, very helpful in the meetings we have had in putting this legislation together.

So I thank the Senator from Ohio very much for his work. And I share his enthusiasm and his desire to see this legislation come up this year, before we leave hopefully. So certainly both of us will do everything we can. We have had some fine meetings with the majority leader on it. Next week, we will be meeting with the chairman of the Finance Committee. Hopefully this legislation can come before us before we leave.

If there is nobody else desiring to speak, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. FAIRCLOTH pertaining to the introduction of S. 1313 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGAL CUSTODY OF MEI MEI

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise this morning to draw the attention of my colleagues to a very sad, unnecessary controversy involving the Government of the United States and the Government of China, a controversy which also involves a little 3-year-old girl.

Mr. President, this is the sad story. A Chinese woman living in Cleveland was diagnosed with schizophrenia. For many reasons, including this diagnosis, it was clear that this woman was not capable of taking care of her daughter. In fact, they had both been evicted from a Salvation Army shelter because of concerns that the mother was mistreating the daughter. Evidence showed that the child had been seriously neglected. So the court stepped in and sent this child into foster care. By the time this little girl was 16 months old, tragically, she has been in four foster homes.

The natural mother was allowed visiting rights. During one of these visits she abducted the child and took her to the People's Republic of China. In June 1997, Mr. President, the Ohio court permanently terminated the birth mother's rights and awarded legal custody of Mei Mei—this little girl's name—to Mei Mei's foster mother. Since last October, the foster mother, the legal guardian of this child, has been trying, naturally, to get Mei Mei back. She wants to adopt Mei Mei, but her efforts thus far have not been successful.

Mr. President, I urge President Clinton to raise the issue of this little child with the Chinese President when they meet. There is an adoptive family waiting in Ohio for Mei Mei. They love her and they will be able to take good care of her. I hope this problem can be resolved in a positive and expeditious way. Therefore, I urge the President to raise this at the highest level between our countries.

A few minutes ago on the floor I circulated a letter—and a number of my colleagues have already signed it—to send to President Clinton urging him to bring the matter up.

Mr. President, sometimes it is easy, as we debate issues, to lose the personal sense about these horrible cases. Sometimes we hear about statistics and sometimes we hear about stories of bad things occurring, such as I have just related.

To try to bring it home, though, and put a more personal face on it, let me read just one paragraph that was written by the foster mother who wants to adopt Mei Mei. This is what she writes:

We have been applauded for our dedication and uninterrupted love for Mei Mei. I can honestly tell you, however, that it was not difficult. When a child enters your life and needs to be held, you hold them. You teach them to laugh, you teach them that you are there, you teach them to be gentle, you teach them that everything in life is beautiful. And then when they start to see that life is not something to be just tolerated but rather to be enjoyed, they develop a sparkle in their eye, which fuels your love further for them. That's what happened with us and with Mei Mei.

So I urge, again, Mr. President, that our President, President Clinton, bring this matter up with the Chinese. It is a small matter, I suppose. But it is a little girl; it is her life. She has an opportunity for a loving family to raise her. She was snatched away from that op-

portunity by a woman who has clearly demonstrated that she is unfit to take care of this little girl. So I urge the President, as he discusses issues with the Chinese, to raise the issue of Mei Mei.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and at this point I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FDA REFORM

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I want to discuss today an important issue involving the FDA. First, let me congratulate my colleague from Arkansas, Senator TIM HUTCHINSON, for his fine work on the legislation that he has just introduced. This bill that Senator HUTCHINSON has introduced would prevent the FDA from implementing a proposed rule that is harmful and unnecessary.

Mr. President, this is the story. Earlier this year, the Food and Drug Administration issued a proposed rule to accelerate the phaseout of metered-dose inhalers that are propelled by chlorofluorocarbon gases, commonly known as "CFC's." Essentially, Mr. President, the FDA has proposed to ban from the market safe and effective medicines that millions of Americans use to help them breathe. For many patients, these medicines mean, quite literally, the difference between life and death.

This FDA proposed ban is not based on concerns of safety, but rather the ban on these inhalers was put forward on the grounds that inhalers that use CFCs deplete the Earth's ozone layer. Now, the fact is, Mr. President, that these inhalers have only a minimal effect on ozone depletion. Asthma inhalers account for only a very small part of this problem. It is estimated that asthma inhalers account for less than 1.5 percent of the total problem.

Perhaps more important, Mr. President, the companies that make these inhalers have already agreed to develop new CFC-free devices by the year 2005—the deadline that was previously set forth in the international Montreal Protocol. These companies are working hard to bring these products to the market quickly and, in fact, they think they will beat the 2005 year deadline.

So I think, Mr. President, it's clear that the FDA's proposed rule to accelerate the phaseout of these products yields no significant benefit to the global environment. What it will do, however, is take away essential medications from Americans who depend on these inhalers to manage serious respiratory illnesses.

Mr. President, over 30 million Americans suffer from some type of respiratory disease, including asthma.